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SIPDIS

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NSC FOR J. BADER

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SUBJECT: GOI PRESSES CASE INVOLVING DEATH OF PROMINENT
HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST

REF: JAKARTA 980 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4 (b+d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: The Indonesian Attorney General's Office (AGO) has stated that it will file an appeal of the Supreme Court's acquittal of former top intelligence official Muchdi Purwopranjono. Muchdi is accused of orchestrating the murder of prominent human rights activist Munir Said Thalib in 2004. Mission has urged the GOI to press for justice in the case. END SUMMARY.

GOI INTENDS TO APPEAL

12. (SBU) The case involving the slaying of a prominent Indonesian human rights campaigner grinds on. The Attorney General's Office (AGO) on July 23 stated that it will formally request a Supreme Court review in the Munir case. In June, the Supreme Court rejected an appeal filed by prosecutors against its December 2008 verdict that served to clear Muchdi Purwopranjono, former Deputy Chief of the Indonesian Intelligence Services (BIN), of charges that he masterminded the 2004 killing. Since June, the GOI has looked for ways to file a formal court review.

A BENCHMARK CASE

13. (SBU) Muchdi Purwopranjono was found not guilty of conspiring to murder Munir in December 2008, prompting widespread criticism from human rights groups. Munir--a highly regarded activist who helped bring to light human rights abuses during the Suharto era--died of arsenic poisoning on board a flight from Singapore to Amsterdam in 12004. Last year, the Supreme Court upheld the conviction and 20-year sentence against Pollycarpus Priyanto for Munir's murder. Former Garuda Airlines employees, Indra Setiawan and Rohailnail Aini, were also sentenced to prison for their role in the murder. The Indonesian government contends--with significant technical and testimonial evidence--that Muchdi masterminded the killing in order to stop Munir's inquiries into the kidnapping of activists in the late 1990's and other crimes.

ACTIVISTS PRAISE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION

14. (C) Human rights activists are encouraged that the Indonesian government plans to continue to press the case against Muchdi. Mission has urged the government to pursue justice in the case. The GOI has underscored that the case is a high priority. All that said, overcoming the initial verdict basically clearing Muchdi will be difficult. Under Indonesian law, any motion to review a Supreme Court ruling requires the AGO to identify judicial inconsistencies in the decision or present new evidence. The standard of review is set high and prosecutors have their work cut out for them

